NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay community Social Services

November-December-January 2001-2002 **$3.00** *Volume 14 Issue 4*

Lesbian-Bisexual Women's Health Study Presents at SBWN Meeting

By Lisa Hake

Jeene Marrazzo, MD, MPH, attended an SBWN meeting on August 26 to share findings of an ongoing University of Washington Study on sexually transmitted disease among women who partner with women (see "What You Don't Know Can Hurt You," this issue). Dr. Marrazzo, principle investigator for the study, discussed current knowledge on bi/lesbian/transgender women and STDs, and led a lively question and answer session on the topic. It was a unique opportunity for queer women to talk openly about the issue with each other and with an expert. It was also an excellent opportunity to gain up-to-the-minute information about STDs among queer women, as well as offer feedback about potential focuses of the study in the future.

Responses to the study and presentation were varied, ranging from relief that a group so incredibly underrepresented in research was finally getting some attention to frustration that the study was not more inclusive (it is limited to women ages 16 – 40).

Dr. Marrazzo emphasized that the study is reliant on volunteers to continue it's work. Any woman between the ages of 16 and 40 who has had sex with a woman in the past year and would like to volunteer is encouraged to contact their office at 206-720-4340, or email jmm2@u.washington.edu.

Additional information about the study and it's findings is available at www.lesbianstd.com

More on lesbian – bisexual women's health study on page 6.

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North Bi Northwest is the quarterly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, as well as creative writing and artwork.

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept submissions on disk with hard copy (PC), typed, legibly handwritten copy or e-mail (sbwn@hotmail.com). If you send us something and we publish it, you get a free issue. Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.

Views expressed in *North Bi Northwest* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate the author's sexual orientation.

Deadline for submissions to the new issue: February 5, 2002.

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of self-identified women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world, and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

North Bi Northwest

Editor:
Cyprienne Schroeppel

Technical Editor
Jan Burke

Staff:
Dedicated Volunteers

PO Box 30645
Greenwood Station
Seattle WA 98103-0645

SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription as noted above.

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of:

Gay Community Social Services
P O Box 2228
Seattle WA 98122-0228

From the Editor...

Most of us are getting back to our 'normal' lives or trying to after the bombings in September. It's hard to do with a 'war' going on and the threat of anthrax contamination. I worry about my sons. I have one soon to be sixteen and I wonder if he will have to become a soldier in a few years time instead of starting out in college or his first job. And this is a 'war' I don't agree with. I do not see how we can ever win this 'war'. I find myself thinking back to the Vietnam years and how that 'war' just went on and on.

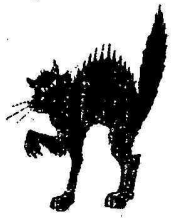
SBWN support group meetings continue to be well attended. We have had some really great meetings. We continue to have new women discovering us nearly every week. There's a letter in this issue from a woman seeking bisexual support groups in her part of Washington. I wish SBWN could accommodate her but we have only enough energy and volunteers to keep the Seattle group alive. I was able to put her in touch with some other women in her area and maybe they will be able to start a group that she can attend.

"Crash site"

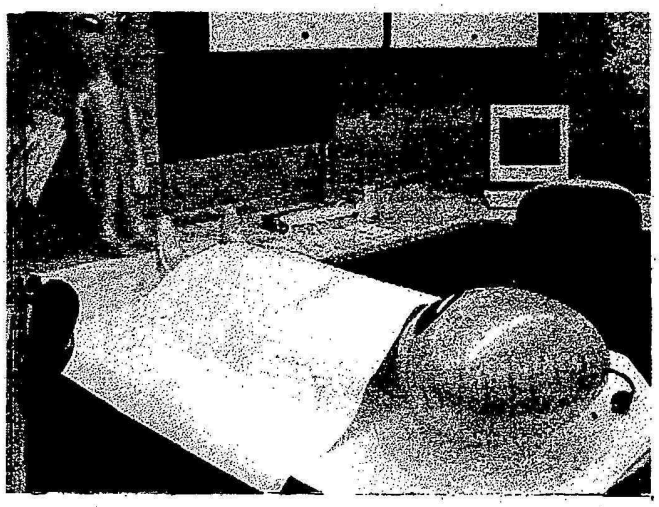
We had a wonderful writing workshop on Celebrate Bisexuality Day. The fruits of that workshop are in this issue. It was lots of fun to elicit thoughts and memories of what it means to be bisexual in this world today. It was sad to recognize that it is not much different than ten or twenty years ago except that people seem to have a few more choices now that bisexuality is a little more widely known and to a small extent accepted as a viable way of life.

Also in this issue, Jan, our fabulous newsletter production volunteer is our featured Valued Volunteer. And we have Lisa's article on the women's STD study. And we are going to start a new feature with advice from a psychic.

I have had an active several months. I was a panelist for an event on polyamory at Seattle Central Community College. Five men and women spoke about their personal experiences of polyamory to a group of primarily young people. I was the oldest person on the panel and perhaps the oldest in attendance. I had prepared a talk, which I changed a bit when I heard the other speakers and saw the audience. So many young people all interested in learning about polyamory was refreshing and gives me hope for the future of our society.



I was privileged to attend Kate Clinton's performance at the Meany Theater. She is on her 20th anniversary tour. I first saw Kate very early in her career when she performed as MC on the night stage at NEWMR (New England Women's Music Retreat). She did an incredible segment on a possible gay television network including a gay "This Is Your Life" type show where they would 'drag lesbians kicking and screaming'



"Alien autopsy"

out of the closet. As usual, she incorporated some current political events into her routine. I have seen Kate perform in Connecticut, New Hampshire, San Francisco and now Seattle over the years and she has never failed to make me laugh. For a good sample of Kate's humour try reading her book "Don't Get Me Started."

I attended an event put on by the Northwest Lesbian and Gay History Museum Project at the Labor Temple called A Celebration of GLBT Histories. There were readings from the oral history project and a performance by the Derivative Duo. I was honored to read an excerpt from my own oral history interview along with eight others. My part was about seeking

community and helping to form a bisexual women's consciousness raising group in the early eighties back in Cambridge, MA. It was a short lived group, lasted about a year, but it was very important to me and helped me in forming a bisexual identity. I have lost track of the other members of the group but occasionally find myself reflecting back on those meetings and remembering how wonderful it was to find other women who considered themselves bisexual.

I ran into another former member a few years back when I attended the Fifth International Conference on Bisexuality in Cambridge, MA. The NWLGHMP is putting out a publication containing bits from all the oral histories they have been collecting for the last six years. It's due out in March 2002 and will be called MOSAIC.

On Halloween the company I am currently assigned to work at, went all out to celebrate. Several departments decorated their workspaces and my group became Area 51. My group dressed as military personnel, doctors, nurses and aliens. We had a crashed spaceship with dead aliens, a decontamination chamber, an alien autopsy room, a laboratory, and a special command center. I got to help with the set-up, contributed some interesting rocks for the alien artifacts exhibits and helped to paint a background mural of mountains and desert for the spaceship. I dressed in my old standby cat costume. Half the company dressed in costumes for the day and many participated in the costume contest. There was also a pumpkin-carving contest. It was a lot of fun and I have never before worked for a company that encouraged its employees to dress up for work on Halloween. Have a wonderful holiday season.

Cyprienne

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Letter to the Editor:

Dear Cyprienne,

I'm sorry to read that you were disappointed by my Burnout Prevention For Activists workshop. Frankly, I'm not really sure that any more could have been accomplished in 75 minutes, with 25 people present. My intention - given the limitation of time – was to give us space to acknowledge how hard it can be, to remind us that we and the work we are doing are fabulous, and to give us permission/a reminder/ideas about how to take good care of ourselves and also of each other. All of these I believe were covered. If you have any concrete ideas about ways in which this workshop might be improved (of course a full or half day format would have helped) I will certainly welcome them.
Enclosed is my membership/subscription renewal to North Bi Northwest. Keep up the excellent work.

All best wishes,
Robyn

Dear Robyn,

I was disappointed because of my unrealistic expectations. I forget that the workshops at the bisexuality conventions are not classrooms or seminars. As I said in my article (Bisexuality Conference, North Bi Northwest, volume 14, issue 3) I was reminded of some things that I already knew, which was good, but I wanted so much more. There were too many people for that to happen if all of us were to have a chance to speak of our personal experiences. The range of experience of the participants was also a problem. I needed a more focused workshop, I think, one somehow more specific to my needs such as how to motivate people to volunteer, how to pull back without completely dropping out, how to refocus and concentrate my energies on the important stuff.
Some concrete suggestions for future burnout workshops:

Have a sign up sheet (pre-registrations?) and limit attendance to ten or twelve maximum.

Run two sessions.

Lengthen the session.

Split the session into smaller focus groups, people with similar problems get together in groups of three or four to brainstorm then bring these ideas back to the main group.

Hold two sessions, part one and part two separated by a break.

Run a separate session with specific techniques and reading suggestions.

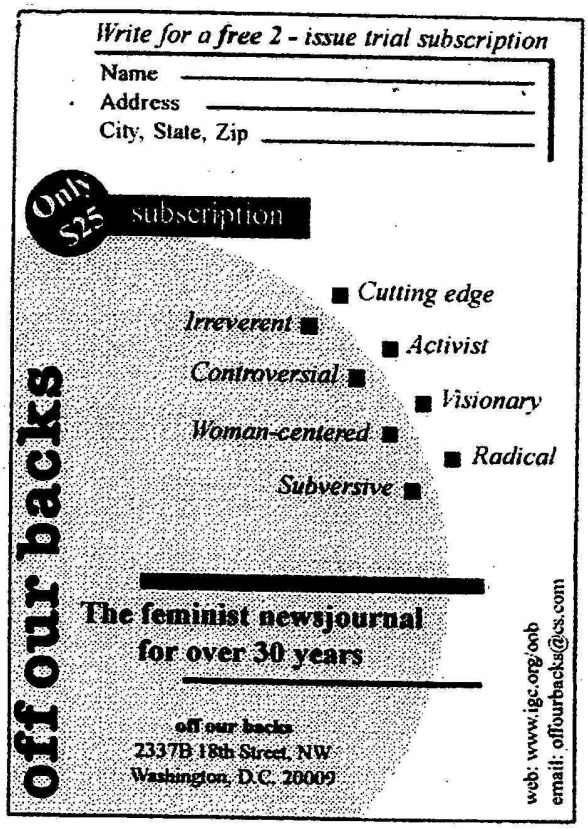
Hand out sheets with tips, techniques and solutions.

How about creating a registry of activists with email addresses so we can have long-term relationships with other activists and help each other out.

Create an on line discussion group of activists to share ideas and problems.

I appreciate your efforts towards helping activists get together and hope you will continue to hold burnout workshops. I also hope that some of these ideas might be incorporated in future workshops.

- Cyprienne



Letter to SBWN

Hi!

I got your phone number and address from the Bisexual Resource Center in Boston.

Even though I don't live in Seattle, (I live in Jefferson county) Seattle seems to be the only place around with Bisexual Support groups. I'm out, I'm comfortable, but I wish I had other bi's to talk to about some of the struggles. Especially bi women because bi guys have some different issues to struggle with.

I'm not on the internet. It probably would be easier if I were, less isolated, but I don't have email.

So, please send me your newsletter, and I will get to the library one of these days to look at your website. Thanks for being 'out there'!

-SL

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What You Don't Know Can Hurt You STDs and Pap Smears in Bisexual and Lesbian Women

By Jeanne Marrazzo, MD, MPH, Shana Sniffen, and Kathleen Stine, MS

Have you ever been told that you do not need to have regular Pap smears to detect cervical cancer because you don't have sexual contact with men? Have you ever been told that if you have sex only with women you are not at risk for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)? Many of us have been the recipients of this type of misinformation, which highlights the lack of information on STDs and cervical cancer risk in women who have sex with women. As a result, many queer women may not get routine Pap smears or tests for STDs, perhaps because they or their medical providers do not feel it is necessary.

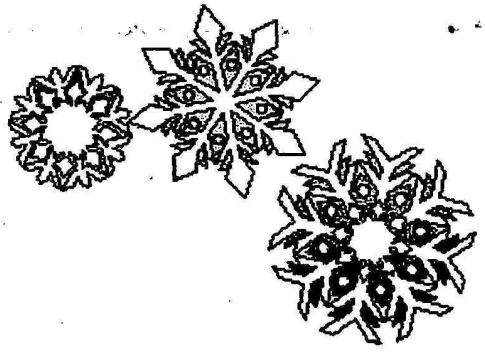
The Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health Study is now four years old and has enrolled 350 women. We have uncovered some very interesting findings regarding transmission of STDs between women as well as attitudes towards and receipt of routine Pap smear screening. One striking finding has been the detection of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), a very common STD that causes genital warts, in about one-third of the women enrolled. Certain high-risk types of HPV can cause abnormal Pap smears and are the major cause of cervical cancer. Not only have we found these high risk types of HPV in women who've joined our study, we have also detected highly abnormal Pap smears associated with the PHV in women who had never had sex with men. Despite this, women who have never had sex with men didn't get Pap smears as frequently as health care authorities recommend, which is a worrisome finding.

We have also found cases of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea in our study participants; these are very important bacterial STDs that can have long-term adverse effects on women's health if undetected and untreated.

Finally, another interesting finding is a high rate of Bacterial Vaginosis (BV), a very common cause of vaginitis in which the normal bacteria in the vagina (lactobacilli) disappear. BV has been strongly linked to problems with pregnancy, including premature delivery and low birth weight. The high prevalence of BV has been noted in other studies of lesbians, but the causes of BV are not known. In our study, BV was much more common in a woman whose partner also had BV, raising the question of whether some unidentified factor is actually being transmitted between women. Adding information that will eventually answer this question is one of the goals of our study.

A key factor to the ongoing success of our research is involving a true diversity of women who have sex with women in order for the results to speak to the many different women who partner with women. We know from research in other areas that some populations are at higher risks for specific diseases. For example, African American women have a much higher prevalence of BV in most studies done to date. Since the rates of premature delivery and low birth weight are also higher in black women, it is quite possible that there is some link with the high BV prevalence. By having a diverse pool of participants, our study hopes to identify significant differences related to diverse groups of women. We are especially interested in enrolling younger women—who are at the highest risk for STDs like Chlamydia and Gonorrhea—and women of color.

Further research on lesbian and bisexual women is critical. While many people understandably don't trust the medical establishment to have their best interests in mind where research is concerned, studying such important conditions as STDs and cervical cancer is the only way we can convince medical authorities that it's important to pay attention to the health concerns of bisexual and lesbian women. One way we have tried to bring back some the contributions made by the community to our study has been to establish a website (www.lesbianstd.com), complete with a question and answer section. This site has information on all of our research, including basic information about enrolling, what the study entails, and what some of the early results have been.



Bisexuality Day Writing Workshop

23 September 2001

Words or terms for bisexual:

Bisexual
Queer
Two Spirits
AC/DC
Swings Both Ways
Fence Sitter
Double Dipper
Switch Hitter
Omnivore
Omni-sexual
Goes Both Ways
Very Loving Person
Try Sexual
Half Breed
Confused
Not Mono-sexual

What does bisexual mean?

"To me it means that a person is sexually attracted to both males and females, responds in a sexual way to either gender, is capable of entering into sexual relations with men and women."

"Lover of all. Poly equals lover of many. I get to choose my lovers from the general population not from segregation like when you're gay or straight. I am an omnivore. I fall in love with people. I fuck people. I am attracted to people."

"Being bisexual is very complicated for me because I could pass for straight if I want to, but I am not. I have been married for about twenty years to a man who is also bisexual. We have five living children and we appear to be a traditional family. Still, I am not totally straight because women really turn me on, like Xena and other women. I have sympathies toward family issues and towards queer issues. Most lesbians, gays and bisexuals do. I do not fit stereotypes but I am bisexual."

"That a person enjoys having sex with both men and women."

"Having sexual and emotional ties to both sexes. Wanting, desiring men and women at the same time or separately. Fitting in nowhere, excluded from both gay and straight worlds. Hidden or mistakenly labeled because of the company you keep (hetero if you are with a man or lesbian if you're with a woman)."

"Being open to having relationships with people of either sex. For me, personally, bisexuality means that I am physically attracted to both men and women, though not necessarily at the same time. I have noticed that at various points in my life, my attraction usually is on one sex or the other. Sometimes, when I am in a relationship with a man for a long time, I feel I've lost my 'bi' self, and think perhaps that's because most others presume I'm straight. Oddly enough, it's when I'm dating a woman that I feel the most 'bisexual'. I don't think it's possible to formulate a standard definition of bisexuality just as it is impossible to define a standard of 'heterosexuality' or 'homosexuality'."

What is good about being bisexual?

"I feel more open, not limited. I can look at anyone and everyone as a possible partner whether short or long term. I feel camaraderie with women and with men. I get to fondle breasts and vaginas and penises and balls. I have the potential to have all my needs and desires met, soft, hard, feminine, masculine, strong, weak and in between, sweet, sour, spicy and just right."

"Variety to the max. Unlimited to love by gender."

"That I can have interesting fantasies and I have an interesting sense of community with other women. I crave loving touches from men and women. I appreciate the sight of nude men and women or imagining what a fully clothed person looks like underneath the clothes. The possibilities of loving women as well as my husband excite me. I feel more in touch with all aspects of myself since I have come out as bisexual."

"It's about having choices. Right now I feel like I want to be mainly with women but if I meet a guy that I am attracted to, I don't want to be boxed. I want to be able to respond freely to that too, if I choose. So it's about being able to choose to love who I want when I want."

"Being bisexual is great because there are less limits to who is available to date. I can revel in the curve of a breast, the velvet of a cunt or the smoothness of a cock. I am most comfortable with myself and fulfilled when I can express my bisexuality."

"Having the freedom to create relationships based on the person/individual rather than the gender."

"What's good about being bisexual is having the ability to appreciate, acknowledge and act upon the beauty we find in people, regardless of their sexes. And purple is a signal of bisexuality and that's my favorite color!"

What is negative about being bisexual?

"I have to constantly defend my 'label', my choice. I am called a fence-sitter, told that I just don't want to choose. I am sometimes rejected by lesbians because I have male cooties or will betray them. I will not leave a lesbian for a man, if I leave, I will leave for another person! I am told that I can't make up my mind that I am incapable of commitment, that I am in transition from gay to straight or vice versa."

"Being misunderstood. Having to explain your self. Assuming others are bi, too."

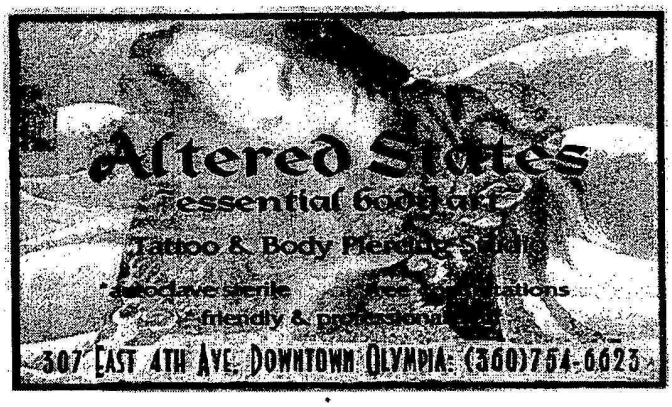
"What is bad about bisexual is that society doesn't really accept us. We aren't totally gay but not yet fully straight. This reminds me of the old Cher song "Half Breed", both other orientations look down on bisexuals. My daughter hates when I wear my SBWN shirt and wants me to not have a girlfriend until she is grown up. People think that bisexuals are gays or lesbians who haven't totally come out as gay. Elton John once said that he was bisexual and married a woman but then said that he is gay. No one in the media says that they are bisexual, even Anne Heche, danced around the subject."

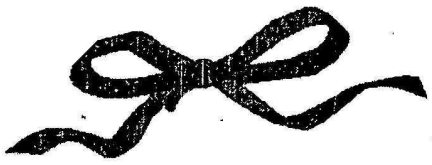
"I am terrified of AIDs and other sexually transmitted diseases. Sleeping with women who may also be sleeping with men, bisexual or straight, increases my fear of sexually transmitted diseases. When I'm with a woman, I'm clear I've got to protect myself. When I'm with a woman I want to allow myself to be open. I won't be if I'm sleeping with a woman who might be having unprotected sex with male partners."

"You can accidentally fall in love with straight women. If you choose to be monogamous with one sex then you get to miss out on a very important part of your sexuality. Having too many choices."

"Not fitting in a pigeon hole. In this society everything seems either one way or the other. Many people may not like gays, but at least they are not undecided like bisexuals. Polarized. This is my personal issue, not feeling like I belong in one camp or the other."

"Negative associations: of being promiscuous, unable to be pleased, associated with Sharon Stone in "Basic Instinct", lesbians who don't want to date you because you are somehow less legit, men thinking it's kinky and encouraging unwanted threesomes with woman. Sometimes not knowing who I am or





wanting to make myself choose a more exclusive label, i.e. straight or lesbian woman, being unaccepted in both straight and queer circles."

Write a positive bisexual story or fantasy.

"Meeting a couple and living happily ever after."

"In a perfect world, I would have a husband and wife. I would be in the middle and respected by my husband and my female lover, my wife. Society would let people of the same sex marry as long as everyone was over the age of consent. In a perfect world, my children, especially my oldest daughter, would accept my bisexuality and my lover. There is too much testosterone in my house; in my perfect fantasy there would be more women power. In my perfect fantasy, people wouldn't judge me badly for being bisexual and try to fit me into stereotypes without knowing me. People like my daughter wouldn't think that I am really a lesbian in transition. Fundamentalist ministers would not insist that I am going to HELL since I don't fit into the heterosexual identity. But alas we don't live in a perfect world yet but we should work to change that."

"My best woman friend who I've known for eight years has mostly been a straight woman. When I came out to her as bi, and poly, she worried about me. She thought that it wasn't my choice (mostly about the poly part) and that I would get hurt because she thought I was doing it for my male partner. But over the years my bisexuality has given her a lot of freedom to tell me about her relationships 'outside of the box', that is, she knows I won't judge her because she wants to experiment with sleeping with a woman or that I will understand when it is hard for her to end a sexual tie with a married man. Because my partners are not the mainstream, and I've chosen a harder path it has brought her and I much closer together."

"For me the best bisexual story is also a polyamourous one. It is about a woman, a man and a woman, living as a family with their children. Overall, this was one of the best years of my life. I felt so loved, so supported, and so in tune with life. It was as if I was perfectly balanced. I found it easy to eat healthy, exercise regularly and organize my everyday life. I loved them together and separately. I had sex with them together and separately. Jealousy was quickly dealt with and put in its place. (Which happens to be the storage closet.) Negotiation ended with higher choices more often than compromises, where no one is completely happy.
This was the most stable home I had ever had, up to that point in time. A time I would dearly love to create again."

Lesbian Resource Center

Where women meet, help, entertain, educate and challenge one another

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SBWN Valued Volunteer

By Cyprienne

How long have you been involved with SBWN?
For about a year.

How did you find out about SBWN?
Interestingly, I had seen the SBWN website a year before, but didn't come in to SBWN until a friend, whom I met on the internet, brought me to a meeting, because someone she had met on the internet was involved with the group, and had mentioned the Sunday meetings to her.

What job do you volunteer for at SBWN?
Newsletter, North Bi Northwest's technical editor.

Have you done other volunteer positions for SBWN?
Sure, work on pride prep and at the booth.

Have you done volunteer positions with other groups?
Always. I began volunteering at the concession stand for our church at the county fair when I was about 10, and have helped stuffing envelopes, setting up for classes, answering phones and even taking garbage to transfer stations, for various art centers.

Why do you volunteer? With SBWN? With any other group?
Well, I have a strong drive to help. I've always helped people who need it. If I have money I give it, if I have time I give it (more often I have time to give). It just feels right. Could be from growing up on a farm. There is a strong sense of community in farm life, often the families are large and one helps anyone who is in need of assistance for the greater good of the farm.

In addition, the farm environment reaches to the neighborhood. If one family was done with haying, and there was a threat of rain, they would go to the neighbor's fields and barn to help get their hay in before it was spoiled. I just have a sense of shared burden, and the benefits of helping one another. Definitely a delayed gratification type of thing, but well worth it in a community, because it becomes a network of help where no one owes anybody since it all started generations ago and there is no score sheet.

It has not escaped me, the personal value in volunteering. While it is not the same as a whole community based on helping one another, volunteering gives me, as an individual, a sense of belonging. I volunteer for groups that are doing something which interests me. Therefore, I get to meet people who have interests similar to mine. As I have gotten older, I have come to realize that volunteering serves me, as I serve, by giving me a social outlet. Certainly, SBWN does that for me.

What are your interests? Hobbies?
I have lots of interests, most of them involve art or Earth. I am finding my own way in the spiritual relm, and that takes up a great deal of my free time (when I have free time).

Jan, Valued Volunteer

I see the spiritual as an extension of the Earth. Gardening is a spiritual experience for me, as is walking in the woods or riding a horse. I like being able to feel the ground beneath me.
To be "grounded" is important to me. Anything I do must be derived from that, or I will quickly loose interest.

Working on the newsletter does well for me in that respect, because I am utilizing words and elements that are part of a flow of energy from the Earth. People often don't realize how secure and grounded they have to be to write poetry or articles about things that are close to their hearts. I get to take those words and art pieces, and put them all together for the newsletter. That's gratifying.

How old are you?
38

What is your real world job or profession?
I am a visual artist. I paint, draw, make prints and occasionally I work in three dimensional mediums. I have recently begun a bookmaking project, which I hope will expand to a wholesale business.

How do your make a living?
Right now my income is the "supplemental" in my household. My husband is supporting me while I build my art career. Hopefully I will soon be able to support him, so that he might explore new avenues in his carpentry career.

Do you have a family you want to tell us about? Husband, wife, partner, children, mother, father, siblings, cat, dog?
Family. . . I have a husband and two boys, a dog and a stray cat who used to belong to our neighbors who have recently moved. (He seems to prefer to be on his own, but we feed him.)

Truthfully, I probably wont' feel my family is complete until I find the woman who is meant to share my life and family with me. I had never thought to consider the term "poly" as a way to describe my ideal lifestyle, but there it is. With the help of SBWN, I can at least convey what it is that I am looking for. I had heard the term used, but hadn't had a definition for it until our group discussions. That makes it a bit easier.

Where did you grow up?
I grew up on a farm in the sticks of central New York State.

How long have you lived in the Seattle area?
I lived in the Seattle area for 5 years before returning to the sticks of New York. (the Earth was calling me)

Do you identify as bisexual?
I absolutely identify as bisexual!

When did you know?
When I was 14

Anything else you would like the readership to know about you?
Hum . . . can't really think of anything. Questions always make it easier for me.

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CALL FOR WRITERS

(THAT MEANS YOU; NO FORMAL TRAINING NECESSARY)

YOUR WORDS ARE IMPORTANT!

We are actively seeking submissions for our next newsletter. Please send in your articles on feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture!

Share your histories, anger, pleasure, and energy.

Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters.

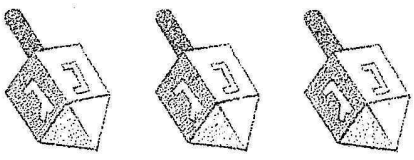
E-mail submissions to Jan at cowbone@earthlink.net
Or send them snail mail:
5167 Stop Seven Road, Whitesboro NY 13492

Poetry:

I feel the need
To write and sing
And talk and laugh
And cry and things
To shout and run
And live each day
In the most
Delightful way.

The world is too small a place
For friends who were close
To never meet again
Face to face.

-Cyprienne



Jan's Note:

Hello Everyone. I've been pondering what all I should be saying to you in this issue of our newsletter. I have been making many adjustments since my move back to New York. I often long for the social environment that was available to me when I was with you all in Seattle. But I realize that also included a much faster paced life than I have the energy for at this time. It had taken me a very long time to get involved with SBWN because the demands of my family and my "budding" art career were so great... great, and sometimes too dramatic to add yet another facet to my world.

I think that is what I want to talk about. I sometimes find myself overwhelmed by all that my life entails. It seems to me that I have heard that from many in our group in many different ways. Everyone seems to have more than they can handle at times and yet they go on. I go on, we all do.

I never considered the holidays a bad time for me, but this Thanksgiving, my denial slapped me square in the nose. I can no longer pretend that I'm immune to holiday blues. What happened is not nearly as important as the fact that it did.

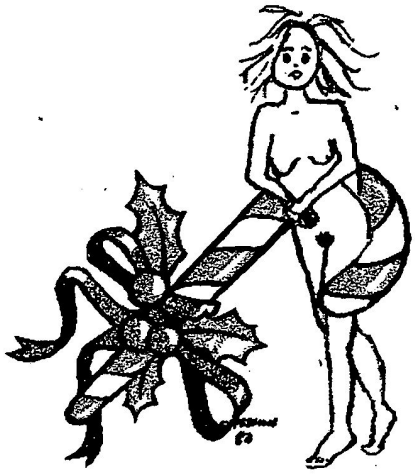
This is partially the reason I decided to put the "Holiday Survey" questions out there.

I think, that all of us try very hard to maintain a sense of harmony and, to some degree, perfection or paradise during the holidays. It's hard. I often find myself vacillating between believing it's really just another day and wanting to decorate to the gills and invite even my worst enemies to celebrate with me. Just for the spirit of it all. You know humanity, one universe, all that dreamy and wonderful stuff.

I am grateful to those of you who answered my survey. Your answers have made my world more manageable. You may feel you've written mundane stuff, and "What's the point?" That, to me, is the point. Things don't always work out perfectly on any given day... even the holidays.

Frankly, I don't remember any of the times that I sat on Santa's lap, but I'm sure I cried. Strange men scare me. So, "never" was a very comforting thing to read in some of your responses. Just as comforting, was knowing that someone's grandfather dressed as Santa and made one of our members a wonderful happy memory that she will have for the rest of her life. "It's all good." is a phrase I learned in Seattle. Thank you all for giving me your responses to the survey and reminding me that it's all good.

Have a wonderful holiday, whichever you celebrate. I will be thinking of you all.



Holiday Questions And YOUR answers

-staff

My favorite stocking stuffer/ Chanukah gift to give is:

❄ odd food & sweet things from Cost Plus imports
Chocolate! Jewelry ✱ Teddy bear candles
What people tell me they want but don't buy for themselves months before. ⁂ Homemade soap
✱ Chocolate

My favorite stocking stuffer/ Chanukah gift to receive is:

❄ dark chocolate covered ginger candy Money Jewelry
✱ Teddy bear candles, romantic kisses
Opals ⁂ Anything homemade, sloppy kisses ✱ Chocolate

My most memorable time on Santa's lap was:

❄ I heard Seattle Men in Leather do a fundraiser for Lambert House every year at the Cuff. They have a SM Santa and photos with the donations to go to Lambert House. It was my first year 'out' as someone into the leather/SM lifestyle. I had my very vanilla husband take me to the Cuff to have my picture taken. Let's just say that Santa was verrrry friendly. Every year since I've tried to have my picture taken on a leather Santa's lap. I sat next to Santa and a woman at the Manor a few years ago. As a child when I would see Santa Claus ✱ I'm not sure I remember. I plan to go to Nordstroms next week to take a picture with him! Never ⁂when my grandpa came into my 3rd grade classroom dressed as Santa Claus. He came right to me and picked me up. I didn't know it was him and I thought I was so special! ✱ Never.

My favorite holiday side dish is:

❄ My chocolate chip cookies ▚ Candied yams and jellied cranberry sauce. ❀ Pumpkin pie and eggnog ✲ Sweet potato pudding □ Blackberry pie ⁂ Grandma's fruit salad ✱ Mashed potatoes and gravy

I would most like to spend this year's holiday and/or New Year celebration at _____ (where) and why:

❄ It's not the where that matters to me it's the who... ▚ With my oldest son in my own home because I don't get to see him very often. ❀ Home with my family because I love them despite all their faults. ✲ Watching the fireworks for a feeling of exhilaration. ⛄ With Gia Consort, a musical group whose polyamorous following is very sweet. ⁂ At the ocean with my family because that's what holidays are for. ✱ At home with my husband because I love him more than anyone and I don't want to deal with crowds.

I would most like to spend this year's holiday and/or New Year celebration with (whom) and why:

❄ With two people I'm in love with... whether it's out, in, at a party, at home... as long as I'm with those I love - it doesn't get better than that. ▚ With a lover because I don't currently have one. ❀ I wish that I was with my family of origin and my current family. ✲ I would love to meet someone. ⛄ My familiar ⁂ With my sweetie and my family, a perfect combination!

My Thanksgiving was:

❄ I had a fabulous holiday! My partners met for the first time and I baked tasty non-dairy things on Wed. Thurs. my partners cooked a bunch of yummy things and we had a few friends over in my tiny new house [under 1000 sq ft]. There was this awesome moment when dishes were falling out of my dish drying rack [which is more hazardous than practical] that my partners grabbed & caught falling dishes as a team in lightening speed. I'm feeling extremely lucky to have such wonderful people in my life. I'm very pleased at how our first poly holiday went. ▚ Fantastic. I spent the day with five other women having a friendly time and eating great snacks and a dinner that I didn't have to cook. It was sort of a potluck and I brought some of my favourite foods, fresh cut vegetables (carrots, celery, radishes, red bell peppers), black and green olives, pecans and sunflower seeds, and cranberry sauce. ❀ Hectic but good. ✲ Good, a nice mix of family, friends, solitude, and recoup time. ⛄ Sweet ✱ Exciting and delicious! ⁂ Wonderful, my whole family was together except my younger brother, who managed to call from Japan.

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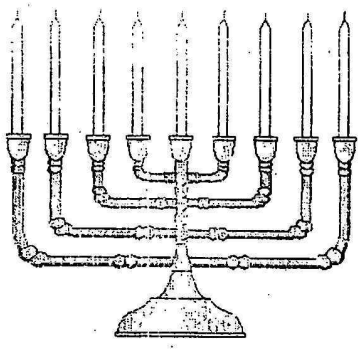
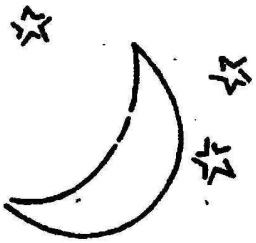
Leilani on Santa's lap



Advice and Horoscopes from "Sister Faith"

. . . For entertainment only

The "Wuwu" Page



Dear Faith,

I'm wondering if I will ever become a famous writer. **-Jen D.**

Dear Jen,

This question is really not about becoming a famous writer. If you love writing and you are able to touch even one soul (this includes your own) in a positive manner, it is worth the effort.

Presently, you are too bogged down with trivial barricades. You need to find your own voice and your niche. Yours may not be a notion that is in demand in the mainstream, but who's to say it is not worth fighting for?

Is it your wish to write a best seller, or is it to convey something from your heart? Go with your heart. It is a sound reflection of your truest self.

Your forte could be elsewhere. Your heart's desire is yet to be revealed. Stay strong. The void you are feeling will soon be filled. **-Faith**

Dear Faith,

My life partner's and my lives and careers are pretty great, except for our empty third bedroom. What does 2002 hold for us in the romance department and where might we find a wonderful woman to welcome into that space? (FYI-I am Gemini, May 22, he is a Taurus, May 16th)

-Seeking in Seattle

Dear Seeking in Seattle,

Your separate sun signs so close in calendar dates cause a powerful dynamic. The two of you are able to create wonderful momentum together.

You don't want a fly by night relationship with a third party. There is an investment that you and your partner will have to make. This investment will have to be equal to the one each of you have made to the other, in order to compliment your current situation. You are preparing to open your home and circle of trust to someone new.

It is a strong possibility that you will find someone to fill that space which the two of you have made. It is meant to be. This wish will be realized in it's own time.

Have patience, and don't settle for an easy fix. Find the right combination. It's out there and is likely to turn out to be someone you already know. But the same process, which has forged the relationship between the two of you, will need to be employed to cement this new one.

Blessed Be and good luck. I will keep you in my thoughts. **– Faith**

Send your questions for Faith to Jan at:
cowbone@earthlink.net or
5167 Stop Seven Road, Whitesboro, NY 13492

Horoscopes

Capricorn Dec 22-Jan 20

Key word: Clarity – Black and white, no gray area. Don't complicate things. Life is not supposed to be that hard. **January-** Money will be a central focus. Make goals and keep them realistic. Do not be miserly and don't be a spend thrift. You are setting the tone for the next two months. **February-**Serious conflicts are possible if your sense of clarity is not utilized to it's fullest. **March-** Avoid winter blues by keeping things simple don't tax waning energies by beginning new projects at this time. Save them for when your strength is restored.

Aquarius Jan 21 to Feb 19

Key word: Cleansing- New beginning, step by step, soul searching, forgiveness, compassion, a sense of humanness. Convince of oblivion vs. the necessity of forgiveness. **January-** Look for your Zen mode. You're missing the mark by a beat. Because of sorrow in your past, it is difficult to put joy before apprehension. **February-**You have the world by its tail because of your cleansing process in January. The future becomes clearer. Goals rise to the surface. **March-** Beware of outside influences that could taint your outlook. Your protective instincts could sabotage your personal life.

Pisces Feb 20 to Mar 20

Key word: Humor- Stay in good humor to battle away blues and keep the inner child in check. **January-** You are harder on yourself then you are on anyone else. High expectations

(Pisces cont.) lead to denial, so cut yourself some slack to prepare for the next two months. **February/March-** Your inner child requires attention. It's an ongoing struggle between clarity and a stubborn will to regress, which can overcome the desire to achieve as the inner child drains your energy. Keep that humor in good working order to maintain a consistent, productive pace.

Aries *Mar 21 to April 20*

Key word: Beauty- Your sense of beauty can only be achieved by balancing the male and female energies to shed light on your inner being. **January-** Balance is off. You're a step behind and a word off. Things may feel unjust, like they don't mesh. The missing piece is a sense of balanced beauty, which will lead you to self reliance and inner peace. **February/March-** Testosterone Abounds! Some sources are suffocating others are free spirited. If a high sperm count is what what you are in need of, donors are available! Throw off the sense of patriarchal domination and doors *will* open to you.

Taurus *Apr 21 May 21*

Key word: Release – Letting go. Unloading the mill stone. Be free. Be passionate! **January-** At this time, nothing is written in stone. This is a changeable situation. You can stay where you are and watch the walls cave in, or you can step around the corner and see what is revealed to you. This current environment you now find yourself in is the result of a slowly building process. **February-** If you are looking for new opportunities in your love life, abundance is on its way. Are you ready? **March-** New inner passions are bewitching your environment. You decide; what is real. Or is it all?

Gemini *May 22 to Jun 21*

Key word: Joy- Allow yourself to experience the joy of everyday situations. **January** brings partnerships. Use your sense of joy to feel out the big picture in potential partnerships. Couldas, wouldas, and shouldas won't do here. Check out the whole scene before making permanent decisions. Note: Keep yourself in check. Don't allow the mood to alter your self-esteem. Just say to yourself: "I think I can", and you will. **February-** Femininity is at an all time high and will be your power source in Feb. Follow the moon for your strength. Acknowledge your inner knowingness. **March-** Watch out for vices. Beware of self-indulgence. It is an unnecessary vice. Simplicity is your elixir of life. Excess can dull the senses.

Cancer *Jun 22 to Jul 23*

Key word: Peace of mind- A necessity in life. **January-** Quandaries. There is a need for motivation and that uncanny feeling that something is missing. It is of utmost importance that you re-enforce your sense of security. Bring something into your home that reminds you of your roots. **February-** Self-confidence is required to do necessary bridge burning. You must unload the "dead wood" to become a whole person. **March-** This is the calm before the storm (albeit a positive one). It is the time to recuperate. Take peaceful moments and timely pauses, for good things will happen soon. It is right around the corner, or in your back yard.

Leo *Jul 24 to Aug 23*

Key word: Simplicity- Don't overreact. **January-**You're running in circles and gaining no ground. Take time to pick and choose. Make priorities. Watch your finances closely. **February-** Be careful not to become too absorbed in other people's problems. Cut back, to ease your own piece of mind. **March-** The dust settles in March, to reveal a true partnership. Best wishes!

Virgo *Aug 24 to Sep 23*

Key word: Delight- Look for delight in the simplest forms **January-** You are winning out! This is a "GO" month. You are now reaping your karmic reward for past good deeds. Enjoy! **February-** Last month was a tough act to follow. Be realistic. Don't let the mundane get you down, because before long positive forces will have you rolling again. By **March** the fruits of your devotion will pan out with an *interesting* return.

Libra *Sep 24 to Oct 23*

Key word: Tenderness- True tenderness is a lasting strength. **January-** This is an easygoing month for Libra. Life flows with no obstructions. **February/March-** If you like your current position, enjoy, but if you feel you are in a rutt, find the positive and enhance it. You are capable of forging a new path for yourself. Is it rocky or smooth? That is up to you. Choose a mantra that will enhance the ease of any task at hand.

Scorpio *Oct 24 to Nov 22*

Key word: Understanding- Believe in the capacity of others to understand. **January-**Sticking to your beliefs will support your goals. However, moral imperatives can be a trap. Be aware of whom and what you are treading on to prove your point. **February-** One must give nurturing and understanding to receive compassion from your peers this month. A spark can lead to a fire. Step lightly. **March-** The people who support you, reflect your sensibilities. Give in order to receive and keep things running smoothly. Kindness at this pivotal time will ensure positive long-term relations.

Sagittarius *Nov 23 to Dec 21*

Key word: Inspiration- Venture to inspire those around you and even yourself! **January-**Take pride in your intuition, as it will ring true. Your inspiration can be passed to another as easily as fingerprints to a smooth surface. Take advantage of its contagious nature. Infect the world with wonderful thoughts! **February/March-** Your unusual approach to life will provide others with a new perspective. Your touch added to a project will ease the complexities caused by droning habits. Rest assured, you are appreciated.

Comments from our group:

26 August 2001
Queer Women and STDs: out from under the radar.

"It was great to hear about this study that we have been handing out flyers for the last three years. I feel discriminated against by the study because of the age range but Jeanne explained why and at least I know now."
"Jeanne's talk was very informative."
"Jeanne's presentation brought a very deep coverage of topics which were not very well addressed in the media, etc."

16 September 2001 Open Rap

"It was good to be here. I feel really good about being able to connect with the group, especially about the tragedy that happened and the repercussions. Peace to all."
"I'm glad I came tonight. I was a little nervous at first, but then I felt very comfortable. Thanks for the opportunity to share and listen."
"I am so glad that I came tonight and I really needed to connect with other bisexual women tonight. I needed to talk about coming out too."
"Great group tonight, old faces and new faces. I was glad to get a chance to be in bi space and tell about my feeling and fears about the World Trade Center Bombing. The coming out discussion was great also."
"It was great to meet all of you! I finally don't feel alone. Can't wait till Friday."
"It was great to be here tonight. Thanks for your support."

30 September 2001 Open Rap

"Great group. Good conversation about bisexual identity within the queer community. I enjoyed hearing others perspectives and learned a lot."
"It's so great that we can be here to support each other!"
"This is a very good chance to vent our feelings about bisexuality."
"Thanks for the new perspectives!"

7 October 2001 Open Rap

"Very interesting meeting, good points were made and we are all great, sexy bi babes!"

21 October 2001 Open Rap

"Lively conversation! Discussing family, out and educating others."
"There's always something I learn here. Thank you for sharing ideas."
"Good job, Leilani. Interesting discussion about coming out and when to stop fighting for inclusion in relative's lives."
"I appreciate all the support I get here and feel like I am truly a part of this group. Thank you."
"Glad to have been here."
"I am glad that I came because a lot of important issues came up and we are a great group of bi BABES!"

29 October 2001 Open Rap

"Great meeting and we had a lively group tonight."
"It's nice to have a place to talk about the things on my mind. It's nice to hear other's perspectives."
"I'm glad this meeting is here."

11 November 2001 Open Rap

"Good group tonight. I enjoyed the new faces and new voices. Good to have all the views about coming out to parents and family."
"Good group. Great conversation. Glad I've returned."
"Good group, I enjoyed the discussion. I'm happy to have found this group."
"Good rap session, I appreciated the openness."
"Good meeting, well-facilitated and interesting conversation."
"This is great meeting, I really enjoyed seeing and talking to all the great women. This group really helps me with my life."
"I really appreciate the opportunity to speak freely and hear various opinions."

WWC

The Women's Welcoming Committee

A safe place for women to learn about BDSM

The WWC meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 7–9 p.m. at the Sex Positive Community Center, 1630 15th Ave West, near the Magnolia Bridge in Seattle.

Meetings are:

- A chance to ask questions
- A place to learn about events
- Open to all women
- Casual
- Free

For more information, including some links to useful resources and instructions for subscribing to the WWC mailing list, visit our web page:

www.bent.org/wwc

Calendar

For locations, confirmations, or more information , call the appropriate message machine and someone will get back to you (with discretion if requested). For SBWN events call (206) 517-7767. For all other Seattle events, (BiNet, Polifidelity). Call (206) 728-4533.

December 2001

Sun Dec 2nd **Topic TBA** 6:30pm Send suggestions to SBWN@hotmail.com

Sun Dec 9th Business Meeting 6:30pm
Poly 4:00pm

Sun Dec 16th **Handling the Holidays** 6:30pm

Sun Dec 23rd **Open Rap** 6:30pm

Sun Dec 30th **Discussing Bisexuality with Family** 6:30pm

Sun Dec 31 **No Meeting**

January 2002

Sun Jan 6 **Open Rap** 6:30pm

Sun Jan 13 **Poly** 4pm

Sun Jan 13 **Safe Sex** 6:30pm

Sun Jan 20 **Open Rap** 6:30pm

Sun Jan 27 6:30pm
Erotica Writing Workshop

Local Groups

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network—Support and discussion groups at the Lesbian Resource Center at 23rd and Jackson, on Sundays at 6:30 pm. For more information, call our message machine. (206)-517-7767

Our website can now be reached at:
http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/

Our email address is: sbwn@hotmail.com

When attending support group meetings, please refrain from wearing perfumes or other scented products for the comfort of all.

Polyfidelity Discussion Group—Support group and communtiy for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible non-monogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bi-monthly potluck discussions, 5:30 pm at the SPCC (Sex Positive Community, aka "The Wet Spot," 1630 15th Ave W., Seattle, WA. For more information call: (206)-728-4533. Http://www.scn.org/~spg/index.html

Seattle Bi Men's Union meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Group Health south building, 15th E. and E. John, room 4A.

Asian Lesbian Bisexual Alliance
P.O. Box 14232, Seattle, WA 98114
http://www.alba.org/alba.asp

Yin.com is a website listing Seattle Women's Events and web sites. http://www.yin.com